



northern  
beaches  
council

# **Strategic Reference Groups**

## **Terms of Reference**

**November 2017**

## **1 PURPOSE**

Strategic Reference Groups (SRGs) are advisory groups that are aligned to the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) outcome areas. The purpose of each SRG will be to consider and advise on projects aligned to their respective CSP goals and strategies. They contribute advice, feedback and other support to Council in relation to issues, initiatives and requirements outlined in their Charters.

These groups provide an avenue for the local community and key stakeholders to play an active and meaningful role. They help shape Council plans, policies and strategic outcomes, with informed consideration of needs across the whole Northern Beaches area and the community as a whole.

## **2 CHARTERS**

Each Strategic Reference Group (SRG) operates according to these Terms of Reference and to their relevant Charter. Terms of Reference and Charters are adopted by resolution of Council and may also be amended by Council from time to time. The scope of each SRG is detailed in the respective Charters (Attachment 1).

## **3 MEMBERSHIP**

The membership composition is detailed in the detailed in the respective Charters (Attachment 1).

### **Councillor representation**

- a) The Mayor (and delegate) and up to three (3) Councillors can be appointed to a Strategic Reference Group.
- b) Councillor membership will be endorsed by Council along with the election of Chair.
- c) Other Councillors may attend Group meetings as observers only.

### **Community and other stakeholders**

- a) Memberships by community representatives and other experts or stakeholders will be in accordance with the membership provisions of the individual SRG Charters

## **4 ELIGIBILITY**

- a) All Councillors are eligible for nomination and membership on one or more SRG.
- b) Community representatives and other members of groups / associations must possess such skills, expertise, experience or special affiliation as detailed in the relevant Charter.
- c) An individual may only serve as a community representative on one (1) SRG unless approval has been granted by the Chief Executive Officer.

## **5 SELECTION PROCESS**

- a) Council will advertise nominations for community representation on SRG.
- b) The selection of members will be undertaken in accordance with Council Policy for Appointment of Community and Stakeholder Representatives on Committees and in line with the criteria detailed in the relevant charter.

## **6 TERM OF OFFICE**

To assist with maintaining effectiveness and the continuity of knowledge within the groups the terms of Councillors and community members have been staggered. The aim is for established members to provide assistance to incoming Councillors after the general election and 12 months later, reciprocally from Councillors to incoming community members:

- a) The term for the SRG is two (2) years for Councillor members or 12 months following election of a new Council. All Councillor memberships will cease at the time of the general election and new Councillors should be appointed to existing Strategic Reference Groups at the earliest opportunity following the council election.
- b) The term for community and other members is four (4) years, commencing within 12 months after an election of Council.

- c) In the event of a resignation, replacement members will be appointed in accordance with the Policy for Appointment of Community and Stakeholder Representatives on Committees.

## **7 SUPPORT PROVIDED**

- a) Council will provide necessary resources to the groups. This will include the venue and administrative support such as facilitating and running the meeting, preparation and distribution of the notice of meeting, agenda and the recording of the minutes.
- b) Council officers may attend meetings to provide information and/or to discuss specific issues and projects with the Group. Council officers may also request that they attend a future meeting in relation to a particular matter of interest.

## **8 TIMETABLE FOR MEETINGS**

- a) The Strategic Reference Groups are to meet quarterly (four (4) times) throughout the year, with the possibility of two (2) extraordinary meetings which may be called by the Chair with a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice.
- b) A meeting will be limited to a maximum of two (2) hours duration unless the Group resolves to extend the meeting to a particular time or until the completion of business.
- c) The schedule of meeting dates and venues will be provided to the members at the beginning of each year.
- d) An agenda will be sent at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

## **9 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

- a) All members are expected to attend the meetings or otherwise tender their apologies to either the Chair or Governance.
- b) No member should be absent for more than two (2) consecutive meetings without first seeking, and being granted leave by the Chair and Governance. Without being granted such leave in these circumstances, the person's membership will be re-evaluated.
- c) While other Councillors may attend Group meetings as observers, the meetings will not be open to other members of the public.

## **10 MEETING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

- a) The Council will ensure that each meeting is properly recorded with the use of minutes, which will be reported to Council.
- b) The quorum for each meeting will be one half plus one of the elected Councillors or Chair. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the commencement time of the meeting, it will become an informal meeting with no recommendations or decisions made.
- c) The Chair directs the progress of all meetings. Subject to any determination by the Chair, each item is to be dealt with in the order in which it appears on the agenda. The Deputy Chair performs this role in the absence of the Chair.
- d) Meetings will be collaborative discussions of ideas and feedback, with the intention of reaching consensus when endorsing items and recommendations. It will be at the discretion of the Chair when a matter is to be put to the vote, by way of a show of hands. For a vote to be carried the matter must be supported by a majority of members present, with the Chair having a casting vote in the event the vote is tied (or Deputy in the absence of the Chair).

## **11 MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUPS**

- a) All members are required to observe Council's adopted Model Code of Conduct, and any other policy or requirement relevant to the proper functioning of the Group.
- b) Members shall act in a professional and responsible manner with the information they obtain.
- c) Members must respect each other (often despite differences) and work together to create an open and

trusting atmosphere. The Group requires openness and honesty in order to function well, and members should feel free to express their opinions and views without fear of recrimination.

- d) A breach of the Terms of Reference may lead to the member being removed from the Group, and shall be managed by the Chair.
- e) Members do not have the authority to make representations to the media on Council's or the Group's behalf. In line with Council's Media Policy, the Mayor is the only person permitted to speak to the media on behalf of the Council and the Group.
- f) Conflicts of Interest: Council recognises that community representatives join such Groups and Committees because of special interests they may have, and Council welcomes their expertise. Nevertheless, it is important that Council understands the basis of advice it receives from the Groups, so members will be requested to declare any organisation they may represent. Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest, particularly pecuniary interests need to be made by members of the Group and recorded in the minutes in accordance with section 442 and 443 *Local Government Act 1993*.
- g) Confidentiality and Privacy: Members may have contact with confidential or personal information retained by Council. If so, members are required to maintain the security of any confidential or personal information and not access, use or remove any information, unless the member is authorised to do so.

## **12 Council's Values:**

All members are expected to observe Northern Beaches Council's adopted Values, outlined below:

- **Trust**: Because being open brings out our best.
- **Integrity**: Because we are proud of doing what we say.
- **Teamwork**: Because working together delivers.
- **Service**: Because we care as custodians for the community.
- **Respect**: Because valuing everyone is how we make a difference.
- **Leadership**: Because everyone has a leading role.